



The Blue Mountain EAGLE

Grant County's newspaper since 1868

Wednesday, January 2, 2019 15st Year • No. 1 • 18 Pages • \$1.00 BlueMountainEagle.com

Proposals take aim at new gun restrictions



EO Media Group/Kathy Aney/TownNews.com Content Exchange
A participant at the April 21, 2018 Second Amendment rally rests his hand on his gun as he listens to a speaker at Til Taylor Park in Pendleton.

By Paris Achen
Oregon Capital Bureau

A few days after Liam Mankins was born in September 2016, his father posted a photo on Facebook of his son wearing oversized sunglasses.
“Future’s so bright gotta wear sunglasses,” a friend commented.
“Yes, yes, it is,” Liam’s father replied. “He’s going to ... make something of himself.”
Then, two years later, on Nov. 4, Liam was killed by a shot from an unsecured gun.
The toddler “got control of a loaded handgun” at the fami-

ly’s Baker City home and “caused the handgun to discharge,” Baker County District Attorney Matt Shirtcliff wrote in a news release.
“The gun had not been secured in a safe place,” Shirtcliff said.
Such cases are motivating two state legislators and gun safety advocates to legally require gun owners to secure their firearms with a lock or in a locked container.
The proposal is among several gun safety measures that state lawmakers want to consider during the 2019 legislative session opening Jan. 22.
Some lawmakers also want to raise the age for buying assault

weapons, give police more time to conduct background checks on gun buyers and regulate handguns in schools and universities.
Under the gun storage legislation, owners would face a fine of up to \$2,000. The average fine would be about \$165 — about the same as fines for driving 11 to 20 mph over the speed limit.
The fine could increase to \$2,000 if the gun owner knew that a child could reach the firearm, proponents said.
The law also makes the gun owner civilly liable if some-

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Dayville school board considering bond election

Public input sought Jan. 8

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Dayville School Board of Directors will take public input Jan. 8 on whether or not to move forward with a facilities improvement bond measure in the May election.
Superintendent Kathryn Hedrick told the Eagle a needs assessment was completed by Straightline Architects of Boise, Idaho, and a school facilities committee composed of local volunteers has met to discuss the company’s recommendations to the board.
The district learned in September that it had qualified for a state school facilities one-to-one matching grant up to \$2 million. The school board canceled its December meeting, so no hard number has been reached on what the district might request in the bond measure, Hedrick said.
The school campus includes seven buildings on 4.6 acres on a hill overlooking town. The high school building, visible from Highway 26, was built in 1924. The elementary



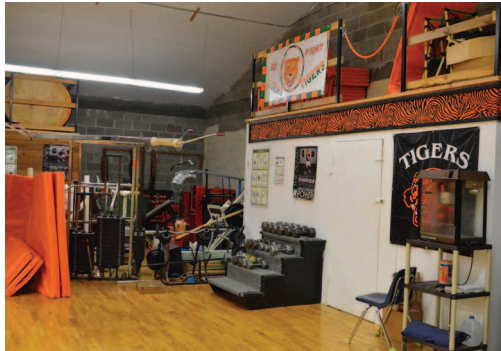
The Eagle/Richard Hanners/

The main building at Dayville School was built in 1924 and is used for the high school, administration office and the cafeteria.

school and gymnasium were built in 1953.
“While the district and its community has always been conscientious about maintaining safe classrooms and work spaces, simply the age of the buildings make it necessary to consider these substantial improvements,” Hedrick said.
Dayville School currently has 46 students,

6.5 full-time equivalent teachers, one administrator, two confidential employees and 11 classified workers, Hedrick said.
According to Straightline Architects, enrollment reached a high of 92 students in 1995 and 1996. They forecast 10- to 16-percent

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The stage in the gym building at Dayville School doubles as the weight room. A wing on the gym building’s northwest corner for a new weight room could relieve the impacts on the 65-year-old stage.



The Eagle/Richard Hanners

Installing a new main entrance at the Dayville School to the right of the cafeteria would address access and security concerns, according to School Superintendent Kathryn Hedrick.



Eagle photos/Richard Hanners

The Tiger mascot painted on the side of the gym building at Dayville School.

Court approval of pot tax questioned

DOR: Tax must be referred for voter approval

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Grant County Court tried to make good on public assurances that a 3 percent tax on recreational marijuana would be implemented if voters overturned a ban on marijuana businesses.
But the tax ordinance approved by the court following a Dec. 19 public hearing may not be legally binding. The ordinance was unanimously passed as an emergency ordinance, with the intent that it would be in effect that same day.
State law, however, states that a local tax on recreational marijuana must go to the voters, according to Joy Krawczyk, a spokesperson at the Oregon Department of Revenue.

“Under Oregon Revised Statute 475B.491(3), city or county governing bodies that adopt ordinances related to recreational marijuana taxes or fees ‘shall refer the measure of the ordinance to electors of the city or county for approval at the next statewide general election,’” she told the Eagle.
“I’m not sure how it works with an ‘emergency ordinance,’” Krawczyk added.

The Grant County Court used a 2016 ordinance from Columbia County as the model for its recreational marijuana tax ordinance, but the Grant County ordinance didn’t include a section from the Columbia County ordinance on the referral and effective date.
That section states, “This ordinance shall be referred to the voters of Columbia County for approval at the statewide general election on Nov. 8, 2016. If passed, this ordinance shall become effective on Jan. 1, 2017.”
The Grant County ordinance instead ends with an emergency clause that states “this ordinance and the provision herein are deemed necessary to facilitate land use actions” and “an emergency is hereby declared to exist and this ordinance shall be in full force and

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Broadband opportunities presented at town hall meeting

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Grant County Digital Network Coalition is forging ahead with plans to improve internet access in the county despite a recent grant-funding setback.
That was the upbeat message expressed by John Day City Manager Nick Green and the coalition’s board during a Dec. 18 town hall meeting.
The coalition learned in December that it had not been awarded a much-needed \$3 million federal Community Connect grant, but federal grant funding to address the digital divide impacting rural communities across the U.S. will



The Eagle/Richard Hanners

The Grant County Digital Network Coalition board hosted a town hall in the John Day Fire Hall on Dec. 18.

increase in 2019.
The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s ReConnect Program will offer \$200 million for rural broadband projects, with a maximum of \$25 million per project. A 25 percent match is required, and the application deadline is April 29. Additional grant and loan combos and low-interest loan offers add up to another \$400 million.
The coalition hopes to leverage the \$1.8 million state appropriation it received in 2017 by using it as a match for grants and to pay for engineering and

other broadband analysis to improve its chances for a grant award.
Green outlined the coalition’s strengths and opportunities for success at the meeting. The countywide agency is forging relationships with community broadband partners and is well financed, he said. At the same time, federal funding for rural broadband has never been higher, and the state is organizing assets to assist rural communities, he said.
But there were weaknesses and constraints. The coalition is a new organization with no track record of success in a small front-

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